



Here are **three** scenes from the first chapter of *Execution, Texas: 1987* as they appeared on a website for the publisher at the time.

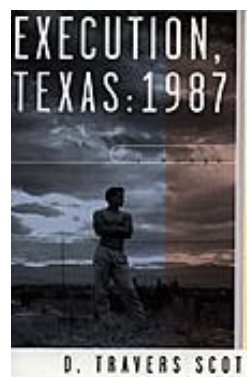
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April, 1987: A Vision at Work

An Excerpt from *Execution, Texas: 1987*


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Green shaded sections are links from the original website and also ones I've since added.

Here's a comment icon.

"We're closing soon, Mrs. Remington." Seeger smiled apologetically at the store's only customer. **Eva's Craft Cottage** sat on the corner of Execution's newest glassed-in strip mall. The wall opposite Seeger and behind his customer afforded a panoramic view of the freeway offramp leading into Execution. Past Mrs. Remington's shoulders, Seeger watched red taillights glide in and out of town.

"Oh, Seeger honey," she sighed. "Don't y'all have those new puffy paints? The Day-Glo ones with glitter?"

Seeger checked the digital clock under the counter: 5:55. "Just what you see out there," he said. "If you want, I can ask Eva to order some."

"Oh, no, don't go to no trouble. Let me **piddle** around a sec more and I'll pick something out."

Seeger shrugged and picked up the list he'd worked out on a pad of *Eva's Craft Cottage* stationery. Bonnet-wearing geese marched across in columns labeled Yes and No.

All break he talked to me. Seeger checked the

Highlighted sections indicate some kind of commentary. These are usually explained by coments. Click the comment icon to read more.



Yes column.

He invited me and LaTonia over for lunch since his older sister and parents were all in Dallas at her pre-grad luncheon thing at private school:
Yes.

I haven't decided if I should pay for this software yet.

He imitated the Dallas policemen arresting AIDS protesters, complete with trout-shaped oven mitts for surgical gloves: Big Yes.

Persistent eye contact:: Scary Yes.

Seeger examined the empty No column.

OK, he's dated **Francie, Lori**, and that Band girl who got kicked in the face by a horse. A No for each?

I've dated **Cordelia** for six months, he thought guiltily.

Let's just say, No for **Excessive Heterosexuality**.

What about how he listens to **rap music** all the time?

Mrs. Remington sniffed. Seeger looked up, startled. "Studying?" she asked. Seeger nodded. "Still got time to teach ceramics Thursday? We're always **plump** tickled having a young person there."

Seeger nodded, blushing, and crammed the list under the counter. He rang up Mrs. Remington. Holding out her change, he leaned forward and smiled habitually.

"Shit!" Seeger shouted.

Outside, Abe's **red pickup** careened down the offramp, brakes screeching. The truck showed no sign of slowing. It flew off the asphalt and into the air above the parking lot like a plane taking off. The streetlamps silhouetted two figures in the front cab, tiny black torsos bathed in gold. Gold engulfed them as the truck exploded in midair, dazzling yellow light spraying from inside the cab



and flooding the store with scorching rays.

"Young man! Hush up that tongue, now." Mrs. Remington snatched the change from Seeger's hand and **huffed** out of the store. 

Nothing in the parking lot. Crickets. Seeger leaned over to lock the door and sat himself down in the empty store.

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Back to Execution, Texas: 1987



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Sorry for the annoying watermark. If I decide to do more of these, I'll buy the software so they aren't there.



April, 1987: Chaos in Abraham's Class



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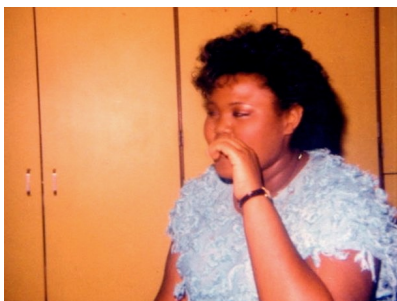
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With an exasperated flourish, Seeger's U.S. History teacher, who was also his father, whipped off his blue-jean jacket and killed *The Last of the Mohicans*.

"Heads up, kids," Abraham announced. "Y'all owe me one. I have decided that the class of eighty-seven Execution High seniors shall be relieved of cramming Mr. James Fenimore Cooper into the final days of the year. We're just too far behind now for y'all to get any pleasure, much less any useful insight into the cross-fertilization of history and literature, from that annual ordeal."

Seeger shoved his hair out of his eyes and gauged responses around the room. He always wondered what his peers thought of his dad, especially when Abe pulled this more-burned-out-than-thou act. Senior Class President Tate Kistwell made a face of exaggerated relief and shot thumbs up to anyone looking his way. Seeger knew he was desperate to regain popularity lost from skipping rodeo team regionals to take his wife and son on a honeymoon.



"Anyhow, after twelve years in the Texas Public Football System, further Wild West propaganda is the last thing y'all need. Instead, please choose from this list, now being passed around , your very own moderately-significant-by-might-easy-to-swallow historical event, and submit a standard report."



LaTonia formed a gun with her thumb and forefinger -- her and Seeger's joke of expecting his father to flip out one day and **go on a shooting rampage**. Seeger smiled grimly. He wondered what his family and life would have been like if, instead of becoming a teacher, Abraham had remained a **newscaster at the Dallas UHF channel**. Seeger had been too young to remember those days, when his dad had been something of a celebrity, driving long hours into Dallas and everyone from Execution First Baptist would ooh and aah over their pastor's son reading the news on TV. Father and son, both preaching their form of truth. He wondered if Abe would be so burned out now, of maybe worse, if he'd stayed on TV. They'd certainly have had more money. He would've eventually moved them into Dallas for sure, not stayed in bumfuck Execution. TV had been their potential escape hatch, but for some reason it had closed.



Comments will explain the pictures



Click on green areas for related links



Abraham slapped the blackboard. "Today we'll continue working on research finals. For those of y'all writing on **Kennedy**, my personal materials on the family are on the back table. Remember: this man changed my life -- any damage to them elicits a merciless beating. **Cultural Literacy** terms are on the board, and today's Current Event topic is 'The Fall of the Illustrious **Jim Bakker and his dear wife, Tammy Faye**.'"



Vikki, Cordelia's stepsister and cousin, dropped her forehead to her desk with a thud.



Seeger sighed. At least I followed that vibe not to buy a copy of *Mohicans*. Wish Abe'd break his work/home separation deal and actually tell me this shit beforehand sometimes. He looked down at his desk. A carved marijuana leaf glared back. He traced his fingertip along the leaf, wrinkling his

nose at the artist's juvenile line, his lack of confident gesture. Next to it, a cartoon freak brandished his doobage proudly.



Seeger remembered times he'd sniffed pot-sweet air as a child.

Once, he'd been perched on a futon and terrified. Joan and her friends from the Historical Society had been disco-dancing downstairs. The noise had swelled -- Body! Body! -- when Joan had opened the door and mounted the stairs up to the bedroom.

"Seeg, hon?" she'd called up. "What you want to talk about? Still not freaked out about Three Mile Island, are you?"

"Um...no." Out the window Seeger had glimpsed another Skylab party. A model of the crashing spacestation dangled from a wrought-iron balcony railing, fluttering against the gray Humble sky. The man on their NASA tour had promised no one would get hit by Skylab. Seeger had decided to become an artist and not an astronaut.



"I just...I think that...that maybe" -- sand grains seeped from his sneakers onto the futon -- "you drink and smoke dope a little too much." He'd winced once the words fell from his mouth, as if afraid she'd raise a fist. Joan had laughed at him.



A shriek cut short his flashback. Seeger turned to see Vikki and her desk fall over.

"Miss Herodotus! Are you all right?"

"Ye-yes," Vikki giggled on the floor. Execution High's chair-desks were a single unit: chair, desktop, and armrest and wrapped around the student as one. Access was only via wriggling around the desktop while simultaneously tucking knees under and feet back. They were a tight fit; LaTonia could barely squeeze into one. Vikki and her desk had fallen to the left, with the floor now blocking her open side. The class cheered on

Vikki's paroxysms; her Outstanding Contribution pen rolled across the gray and red-flecked tiles.

Seeger cringed but offered no help. Vikki falling over drunk was a familiar sight. Doing so in first period was a new twist, but he'd distanced himself from Vikki to try to sustain Abe's approval of Cordelia.



"Someone give Miss Herodotus a hand, now." Mr. King seated himself.

Tate sprung to Vikki's rescue. Her squeals hit a new pitch as his arm descended into her desk.



LaTonia tipped her hand back like a bottle. Seeger nodded. He turned around to see his dad looking squarely at him, eyebrow raised. Mr. King turned to LaTonia, shook his head. He gazed up at his poster of Bruce Springsteen's blue-jean butt. He breathed deep, as if for strength. Seeger and LaTonia checked each other. She shrugged. Seeger removed himself from the whole situation, writing a note to his girlfriend.



*Coredie Sedgwick,
Your stepsister/cousin fell over in
class today. Perhaps you two should
save happy hour until after school.
Hope you arrived at NTSU in one
piece. By the way, please conserve
the blue curacao for this weekend --*



Seeger paused, remembering his introduction to the blue liqueur just over a year ago, when he'd recently been dumped by one boy and was wallowing in unrequited love for another:

"Ain't this awesome?" Sam had said, wiping his palms on the steering wheel of his cramped Pinto hatchback. Seeger had slumped forward against the front-seat headrest. "Mm-hm," he'd murmured listlessly.



"Seeg!" Sam had huffed. "You got to at least try to get over this Jésus thing." He'd shoved Seeger off the seat edge. "He dumped you 'cause he's too chickenshit his family'd find out he's a fag. Of course they'd find out, with the tongues in this town? Can't believe yours haven't. But if he didn't have the eggs to go through with it, then fuck him!"



I caught a ton of shit when Pastor Hank found out Molly and I were screwing, and I took it like a man. Jésus was a fucking wuss, you're a great guy, and I'm taking you out tonight with my new girlfriend. What more you want?"



Sam had grinned, eyebrow cocked. Seeger had eyed his cheek stubble, a virile smudge darkened in the orange streetlights of the expressway junction parking lot.



Seeger had fallen into the backseat. "How about being out with just you?"

Sam had shrugged this off as a minor, technical detail they'd been over hundreds of times. "Seeg, you know if I ever decide to check it out, you're my man." Seeger had blushed.



"Hey -- she's coming." Sam had turned around and stared, **agape**, out the passenger window. "God, she's such a fucking babe. Totally blows all the Execution chicks to hell. Wish she'd moved here sooner for sure."



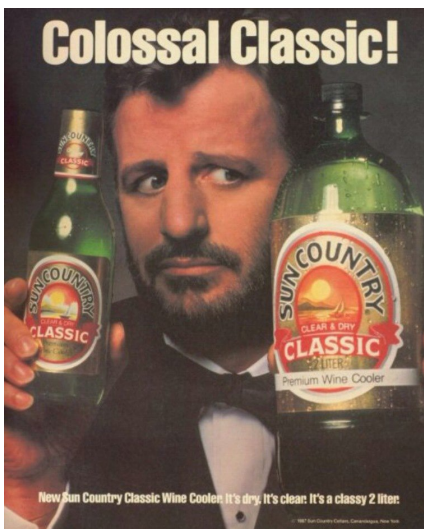
Seeger had looked across the lot at Cordelia sauntering out of New Peking Fast Go, proudly holding aloft a paper bag. A scarlet paisley bow tied up her ginger curls, thick strands corkscrewing down across her left eyebrow. An extra-large T-shirt for their school's paper, the *Execution Journal*, had billowed in the arid night breeze, flapping their school colors of red and black around her thighs' snug maroon floral-print pedal pushers. Tiny black socks had peeked above her scuffed red pumps. Pulsing in the wind, she'd sailed across the lot, a vision of sensuous blood tones, a ruddy heart beating its way through the sterile cement terrain.



"Mission accomplished, boys!" She'd reached into the bag. "It's **Sun Country Coolers' Black Cherry Chablis**."



She'd crinkled her face, and Seeger had noticed, in the oblique light, her freckled nose and cheeks were glittery -- not big chunks like actual glitter, but a sheer dusting of golden powder. No wonder



Sam's so worked up, he'd thought. She really is, God, subtle but really, um, glamorous. Never see other girls at school like that.



Cordelia had **smiled, shrugged**. "At least my womanly wiles procured us something." She'd glared at them both. "The man in there loves me. His name's Chow. He's sweet, but he has a terrible selection. There was a blueberry flavor, but **it wasn't blue**, so I didn't get it."

Sam had listened to Cordelia with **some affected expression of studly nonchalance**. God, Seeger had realized, **he really has no clue what she's about**.



"Oh, God, blue would've been so great," Seeger had said.

"Mm-hm!" Cordelia had purred. "I love blue drinks!" **Blue drinks**. The very concept had entranced Seeger.



"Blueberry'd taste like shit," Sam had objected. "We could've just gotten Coronas."



Seeger and Cordelia had groaned in unison. "No way, Sam," Seeger had explained. "Not blueberry, just blue, the *color*. And it'd have to be a mixed drink; you couldn't have blue beer."

"Yes, they have these fabulous blue curacao margaritas at **Pancho's Buffet** in Grand Prairie."

"Wish we could get blue drinks to go," Seeger had sighed.

"Well," Cordelia had said in a mischievous singsong, "if my stepsister/cousin is working -- you know Vikki, right? -- she might be able to sneak us some in take-out cups."

Seeger had clapped. "Yes! Blue drinks to go!"

"Blue drinks to go!"

"Fucking A!" Sam had joined in, starting the engine. Marc Almond's overwrought **"Love and**



Little White Lies," Seeger's pointed-yet-unacknowledged-by-Sam selection, had blared from the cassette.

"Pancho's cattycorner **Sound Warehouse?**" Sam had asked.

"Yes," she'd said, opening a cooler with a single, decisive twist and handing it to Seeger. "At Pancho's Buffet, home of Psychotic Chefs Anonymous, we shall find the rapture that is: Blue Drinks To Go!"

Seeger had sipped his cooler, mesmerized. Her words had sprayed through the night air, **a heady and delicious perfume like mist from a tangerine rind.** "Ecstasy shall be ours," he'd murmured.

"Yes!" she'd cackled, gleefully returning his smile in the rearview. She'd cocked her head, eyes maintaining a lock with Seeger. "Oh, Sam, I *like* your friend. Vikki told me you two were fun, but you never know, with her judgment." She'd settled into her seat and instructed them, "Let's have a wonderful time tonight."

Seeger recalled the warm mix of sexual currents he'd felt with Sam and Cordelia. Being around them had been an intoxicating triangle, until **Sam had fled the mounting emotional intensity and left Cordelia and Seeger to each other's devices.**

Cordelia had known full well Seeger liked guys. Their shared infatuation with and subsequent resentment toward Sam had been one of their first major bonds. But in the six months she and Seeger had been going out, he'd never been attracted to any other guy enough to act. He let Cordelia think, and tried to convince himself, that his bisexuality could remain merely a chic accessory. It had been easily confined to **ours** with **International Male's Undergear catalog** and fistfuls of viscous bathroom liquid. No testosterone bundle had ever come close to eclipsing her stunning persona until now, until Kent. Seeger looked at his note to Cordelia. What if I get all drunk and stupid and start babbling to Cordelia about Kent, like I almost did on the X? Not that there's really anything to hide; nothing's



happened.

Kent. Kent was definitely something new -- a magnetic sophomore class clown and cocky athlete. He was smart, too. Honor Roll, Beta Club. He didn't act the part, though. He wrote sarcastic letters to the school paper about cafeteria elimination of chartreuse gravy and enlightened his English class as to Whitman's sexual preference. They would say "hey" passing in the halls, and Seeger would go to his next class stupefied, starting at his desk, the walls, out the window, thinking of nothing else. Kent had the amazing ability to, for short periods of time, short-circuit Seeger's continually churning brain, halt the relentless parade of memories, worries, pop culture flotsam, and emotional waves. Kent was two classrooms down in sophomore English. Seeger got hard.



Seeger approached his father's desk, nervously humming Marc Almond's cover of "You Only Live Twice (007 Theme)" -- the B-side to the U.S. *Soul Inside* EP Marc recorded when he was with Soft Cell. Not to be confused with plain old "007 Theme" on the UK *Soul Inside* EP, which was totally different, the instrumental Bond theme from *Thunderball*. This was from a different movie altogether, and even though Marc hadn't written the lyrics, they were so intense he could have. Seeger had drawn them in calligraphy on his binder. Eyes lowered, he snagged the bathroom pass from the vertical file labeled BATHROOM PASSES and went to go jack off.



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April, 1987: School Lunch

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LaTonia Freeman bolted ahead of Seeger, slicing through the air with her lunch tray to lay claim on the Curse's only free table. "Sorry, Troy," she sighed as she slid into the blue-and-gray bench. Troy and Seeger nodded; they were distant stepcousins of some sort through Joan's side of the family. Troy skulked away. Seeger settled across from his best friend.

The Curse was the fast-food property directly across from the expressway from Execution High School's front steps, on the terminal side of an L-shaped stripmall that also housed the Beauty Barn, Karla's Kuntry Krullers, and Fashion Fantasy. Seeger and Cordelia called it Alliteration Alley. Despite the school's constant customer base, businesses that moved in to the Curse inevitably failed. The property changed hands annually. An ex-football player's entrepreneurial venture marked its current incarnation: Tony Hill's Cowboy Catfish. Last year it had been Char-Dog, sophomore year it had been Wok 'n Roll, and Seeger's freshman year it had been Fatburger. Execution kids measured their lives in food from the Curse.

"Too hot to eat this shit outside." LaTonia scowled

and stuck out her tongue. Seeger nodded, grimacing as he spit a scalding hush puppy into his palm. LaTonia shook her head. "Boy ain't got no **home training** a-tall."

Seeger's savior and co-conspirator in Honor Society, LaTonia had found the other **"gifted"** students as hopelessly inane as Seeger did. Together, they'd endured advance placement classes and associated activities she'd deemed essential to becoming her family's first **powerlawyer**. Seeger had no such aspirations, but since his father was a teacher and Seeger's aptitude **percentiles high**, he'd always been placed in the **AP classes** and honorary clubs. He'd tried to make the best of them. LaTonia and Seeger's study sessions usually devolved into scheming for parties only their circle of **half a dozen friends** would enjoy: **a seventies Groove-a-Thon**, replete with Pam Grier videos, Curtis Mayfield albums, and compulsory, **marathon rounds of the *Mod Squad* board game**. Going out with Cordelia had cut down on evening party-planning sessions, but since Cordelia spent her days at nearby North Texas State University, LaTonia and Seeger had plenty of time together at school.

"So," she said, snapping her paper napkin in the air and draping it across her lap, "what'd I miss at prom?"

Seeger swished **Pineapple Crush** around his mouth. He shrugged. "The VFW looking like it does for every other dance. Waiting in line for pictures: it was a fairy tale theme, you know? Prom Committee didn't want us art fags involved, so they did the set themselves. They built this backdrop that was all **curled-paper spires for castles and shit**. It looked like where the trolley goes in *Mister Roger's Neighborhood*."

"Meow-meow prom?" LaTonia purred in a feline singsong, imitating the kids'-show puppet. "**Meow corsage? Meow-meow Everclear? Meow-meow rape?**"

Seeger slapped his forehead. "Rape! I knew I

forgot something, we were so busy with the rubber chicken -- "

"What you doing with a rubber chicken?"

"The food -- "

"I though y'all weren't going to eat?"

"I was still hungry."

LaTonia shook her head. "One day your metabolism's going to crash and you'll end up looking like me."

"Is *that* how you become Negro?"



LaTonia pelted him with a catfish plank.

"Oh!" he said. "The big deal was that Student Council brought in this DJ from Dallas who spins at Klub Sprx."



"OOOOH," LaTonia gasped, eyes wide.

"*Supposedly*. But he played total crap, worse than they play there, so it didn't make any difference at all. He played 'Hot for Teacher!'" Seeger



shuddered. "Anyway, we just ate, got pictures, and then took off for Dallas; Cordelia got us in to Uz!"



"How was the X?"



Seeger scrunched up his face in recall, chewing a hush puppy. "Mmmm...It was really wavy, and not that speedy, so that was nice, but coming down seemed scratchier than usual. I ended up with a stomachache from all the grapefruit juice. I had real trippy dreams."

Seeger frowned, remembering the pre-X truck-wreck vision at dinner. He wasn't sure it had really happened. Here and now, at a fast-food hut across from school, gossiping with his best friend, surrounded by the jerks he'd sat in classes with all his life, the collision seemed ephemeral and vaguely ridiculous, like his post-X dreams of getting sexy with his mother. Eech. He shook his



head.



LaTonia peered out through the grime-streaked glass. "Ashton used to go to Uz a lot with his ex; she was a real X-girl."

"Y'all should meet us there sometime! I can't believe you're still hiding him from all of us," Seeger slouched into his bench, sulking.

LaTonia rolled her eyes. "Remember? He doesn't know I'm in high school, OK?" She knocked knees with him under the table. "Maybe I'll tell him this summer, after graduation. 'Sides, you're one to talk about keeping secrets, when you've got a fantastic girlfriend already."

Seeger sat up. "What?"

LaTonia cleared her throat. "Kent Lozone?"

"Oh." Seeger looked around the restaurant. His voice dropped. "Nothing's happened between Kent and me. We hardly even know each other." Seeger forked coleslaw into his mouth, scowling.

"Yeah," LaTonia said, eyeing him, "but you're in love with him."



Mouth full of mayonnaise and cabbage, Seeger nodded glumly.

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